

HJR

59

Alaska State Legislature

REPRESENTATIVE
MARK BOYER

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE



House of Representatives

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February 22, 1988

Representative Fran Ulmer, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
P. O. Box V
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Dear Representative Ulmer,

You have before you two resolutions regarding deployment of the Sixth Infantry Division (Light) in Alaska. I will not belabor the obvious inaccuracies and misstatements of fact in House Resolution 12, nor extol the merits of HJR 66, which I have co-sponsored with the Interior House delegation. I would rather touch briefly on the importance of a unified state position on all matters involving the federal government and the danger which is posed to the state's best interest when the residents of one area of the state indulge in regional back-biting at another region's good fortune.

Last week the members of this body put aside considerable differences of opinion on major issues to craft a resolution which put the state on record in support of exploration and development of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Like all good compromises, this resolution left some legislators less than satisfied, but the recognition of the fact that we must present a unified front to the federal government, as we agree to disagree and continue the debate on certain issues in the "privacy" of our own Legislature, resulted in a unanimous vote in the House and concurrence by the Senate.

The situation with regard to deployment of the Sixth Light Infantry Division is much the same as that which confronted us in the ANWR debate. When the decision to locate the division in Alaska (with the headquarters in Fairbanks, but temporarily in Anchorage while facilities were constructed at Fort Wainwright) was made in 1985, several other states which had been seeking the division resented our good fortune, and some of their federal representatives have become opponents of funding for facilities necessary for the deployment of the L.I.D. Federal budget cuts under Gramm-Rudman and further reductions under the deficit reduction compromise between the Congress and the Executive Branch represent an additional and very real threat to continued deployment and further funding of the division in Alaska.

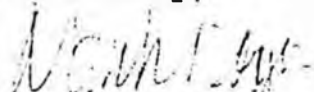
The different regions of the state will always compete with each other for federal installations, new industrial developments, tourist facilities, and any other sources of potential economic

Representative Fran Ulmer
February 22, 1988
Page 2

benefit. This competition is normal and healthy, and the regions and, ultimately, the state as a whole, are the better for it. Coastal communities are about to begin vying for deployment of naval ships and personnel, and while my community is hors d'combat in this particular contest, we wish the eventual winners well and stand ready to support them in their endeavors, because we realize that what is good for one region of Alaska will, in the long run, benefit all Alaskans.

Let us not be so short-sighted that we allow regionalism and election year saber rattling to put us in the position of cutting off our nose to spite our face. If the deployment of the Sixth Light Infantry Division (Light) goes on as planned, the state as a whole will benefit from economic diversification, increased employment and, in all likelihood, further federal deployments in Alaska (i.e., the Navy) after a positive experience with the division. It is ludicrous for this body to consider a resolution which questions the Army's judgement in its deployment of the 6th L.I.D. at a time when our congressional delegation is beating back attempts to de-fund that deployment. If we hand the opponents of the deployment here a monkey wrench like HR 12, and they use it to sabotage the deployment in Alaska, we all lose.

Sincerely,



Mark Boyer
Representative